

EXHIBIT 3



Abandoned homes torn down in Needham's 'forgotten' community

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Ever since she moved to Needham in 1954, Nina Prohodski felt ignored by the town.

As a resident on Riverside Street- located a block away from the border with Newton, across Route 128- she said that living on the outskirts of the town meant that for years her and her neighbors' needs were given the least amount of attention by local officials.

The roads were in disrepair, the street lights didn't work properly and the town regularly failed to respond to problems that arose in a timely manner, she said.

But worst of all, for the past two decades, a row of five abandoned homes across the street were neglected eyesores. Heaps of trash would blow over onto the multiple properties she owned. Because of this, wild animals began to accumulate in the area and residents would regularly open their doors to find them on their front steps.

"For over 20 years I've been cleaning up this neighborhood because of other people's neglect. I'm 85 years old and I cannot do it any longer," Prohodski told the Needham Times last year. "I pay over \$40,000 a year in taxes to the town, but I have to live with this? It's not fair."

Fortunately for Prohodski, her prayers were finally answered as the abandoned homes were demolished three weeks ago, marking a turning point in a community that for a long time felt left behind.

Abandoned homes on Riverside Street in Needham, Arside Street cleared o



"The whole neighborhood is delighted. We're just so happy that we don't have skunks and raccoons on our doorsteps when we come home at night," Prohodski said. "Everyone's pleased that we're getting some attention and that Needham is finally noticing us now."

According to Needham Public Health Director Timothy McDonald, the town had been working for several years to try to get the owner, John Savanovich, to sell the properties but had repeatedly run into obstacles.

They issued numerous letters ordering him clean up or face fines, but because he supposedly didn't have enough money to pay, that method failed to make a lasting difference. They tried to condemn the houses as unsafe for human habitation, but were unable to because he didn't have any tenants. And because they couldn't identify any close family members, they couldn't force him to go elsewhere.



Ultimately, thanks to support from Attorney General Maura Healey's office and their Abandoned Housing Initiative, they were able to reach an agreement with Savanovich, who sold the properties to a local builder at the end of November.

Savanovich could not be reached for comment. The Needham Times was able to contact his attorney, Nick Louisa of Russell and Associates, though he declined to comment on why his client chose not to sell the land for so many years or what made him change his mind.

"John has lived his entire life in Needham. He grew up on those properties, he loves the town and has a lot of respect for his neighbors," Louisa said last May, after landscapers cleared the properties of the trash bags, beer bottles and cat food cans that had collected in large piles.

According to Building Commissioner David Roche, the lots will likely be turned into condominiums and should be completed within six to eight months.

"I think it's a major boost for that neighborhood, as far as property values. Those other homes were pretty run down and were in that state for a long time," he said.

While the boost in property values is certainly a nice bonus, Prohodski said she's just glad that she won't have to drag bags of trash off her properties any more.

"I don't have any complaints," she said. "This whole neighborhood is changing."